

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 NOUAKC 00396 01 OF 02 202330Z

15

ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 OES-03 OFA-01 EB-07

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CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01

SP-02 INT-05 /090 W

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R 201427Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

TOTUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 5161

INFO AMEMBAYAY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY SEOUL

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

AMCONSUL CASABLANCA

AMEMBASSY RABAT

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 NOUAKCHOTT 0396
CASABLANCA FOR REGIONAL FISHERIES ATTACHE

E.O. 11652: XGDS(1)

TAGS: EFIS PFOR MR KS

SUBJECT: ROK FISHERY INTEREST IN MAURITANIA

REF: 75 NOUAKCHOTT A-76 (NOTAL), 75 NOUAKCHETT 2256, CASABLANCA
081 (NOTAL), NUAACHOTT 144 (NOTAL, STATE 22115 (NOTAL),
SEOUL 810 (NOTAL), CASABLANCA 202

SUMMARY: WE BELIEVE TIME HAS ARRIVED FOR ROKG TO DECIDE ON ITS
GOAL IN DEVELOPING LINKS WITHMAURITANIA, CAREFULLY MAP OUT
STRATEGY FOR THIS PURPOSE, AND DESIGNATE DEFT AND EXPERIENCED
PERSONNEL TO IMPLEMENT DECISIONS. DUE TO DPRK INFLUENCE IN
MAURITANIA, BEST ROK CAN EXPECT TO OBTAIN IN FORSAEEABLE FUTURE
IS EXPANSION OF FISHING ACTIVITY IN MAURITANIAN WATERS AND PER-
HAPS SMALL FISHERIES OFFICE IN FISHING CENTER OF NOUADHIBOU. END
SUMMARY.

CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 NOUAKC 00396 01 OF 02 202330Z

1. IT IS OUR VIEW THAT ROK HAS REACHED POINT WHERE IT MUST MAP

OUT CAREFULLY STRATEGY FOR CONTINUING AND EXPANDING ITS FISHING ACTIVITY IN MAURITANIAN WATERS. IF ROK IS SERIOUSLY INTERESTED IN THIS EFFORT, STRATEGY SHOULD BE REVIEWED AT RELATIVELY SENIOR LEVEL AND IMPLEMENTED BY PERSONS WHO CAN HANDLE THIS DELICATE ISSUE IN DEFT, SUBTLE, AND SOPHISTICATED MANNER. ROAD TO SUCCESSFUL ROK FISHING ACTIVITY IN MAURITANIAN WATERS IS REplete WITH PITFALLS AND ROK IS PLAYING FOR HIGH STAKES. WE URGE THAT EVERY CARE BE EXERCISED AND OFFER FOLLOWING INFORMATION/SUGGESTIONS THAT DEPT MAY WISH TO SUGGEST BE USED BY EMBASSY SEOUL IN DISCUSSIONS WITH ROK OFFICIALS.

2. FIRST THING ROK NEEDS TO DO IS DETERMINE GOAL OF ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH MAURITANIA. DOES IT WISH TO CONFINE TIES TO FISHING DOMAIN OR DOES IT WANT TO TRY TO ESTABLISH SOME KIND OF FORMAL RELATIONSHIP WITH MAURITANIA ALONG LINES THAT IT HAS ESTABLISHED WITH SENEGAL? JUDGING BY SERIES OF QUESTIONS THAT ROK FIRST SECRETARY IN DAKAR RECENTLY PUT TO EMBASSY DAKAR POLITICAL OFFICER, WE JUDGE ROK IS GIVING SOME CONSIDERATION TO MORE FORMAL TIE WITH MAURITANIA. IN OUR VIEW, THIS IS ILL-ADVISED. DPRK HAS SIZABLE AND EFFECTIVE PRESENCE IN MAURITANIA. DPRK AMBASSADOR IS DEAN OF CORPS AND HAS FREQUENT CONTACT WITH MAURITANIAN OFFICIALS FROM PRESIDENT ON DOWN. DURING LAST UNGA, MAURITANIA COSPONSORED PRO-NORTH KOREAN RESOLUTION. ALTHOUGH TOTAL DPRK AID PROGRAM IS NOT LARGE, IT IS VISIBLE, HIGHLY-PUBLICIZED, AND APPARENTLY APPRECIATED BY GIRM. DPRK RUNS FAIRLY ACTIVE CULTURAL AND PROPAGANDA PROGRAMS. IN ADDITION, NORTH KOREANS RECENTLY TRAINED MAURITANIAN CHILDREN FOR CALISTHENICS PROGRAM DURING 15TH ANNIVERSARY OF INDEPENDENCE CELEBRATIONS. WE DO NOT BELIEVE THAT DPRK WOULD QUIETLY SIT BACK AND WATCH ROK ATTEMPT TO SET UP OFFICIAL PRESENCE IN NOUAKCHOTT. ON CONTRARY, WE THINK DPRK CAN AND WOULD BLOCK SUCH AN EFFORT.

3. AT SAME TIME, ROK MAY WELL BE ABLE TO INSTITUTIONALIZE AND EVEN EXPAND ITS FISHING ACTIVITY IN MAURITANIAN WATERS. WE EMPHASIZE, HOWEVER, THAT GREAT CARE MUST BE USED IN THIS ENDEAVOR. FOR EXAMPLE, CONCERNING

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 NOUAKC 00396 01 OF 02 202330Z

QUESTIONS RAISED BY SE JAI LEE IN CASABLANCA 202, ROK IS MISTAKEN IF IT BELIEVES THAT EITHER ABDALLAH OULD ISMAIL, GIRM DIRECTOR OF FISHING, OR BRAHIM DHERATT, CHIEF OF NOUADHIBOU MARITIME DISTRICT, HAS AUTHORITY TO SIGN OR APPROVE FISHERIES AGREEMENT WITH ROK. DUE TO POLITICAL SENSITIVITY OF ISSUE, THIS DECISION WOULD BE TAKEN AT LEAST AT MINISTERIAL LEVEL AND PERHAPS EVEN BY PRESIDENT OULD DADDAH. ALTHOUGH BLESSING

BY OULD ISMAIL, WHOM WE BELIEVE IS OFFICIAL LEE MET
IN LAS PALMAS, AND DHERATT OF PROPOSED GIRM-ROK AGREE-
MENT WOULD BE MOST HELPFUL, IT WOULD NOT BE DECISIVE
FACTOR IN OBTAINING APPROVAL. WE ALSO WISH TO POINT
OUT THAT OULD ISMAIL WAS NOT ONLY RECENTLY NAMED
DIRECTOR OF FISHERIES, BUT HE HAS NO TECHNICAL BACK-
GROUND IN THIS FIELD.

4. WE THINK BEST ROK CAN HOPE FOR IN FORESEEABLE
FUTURE IS CONTINUATION AND POSSIBLY EXPANSION OF SOUTH
KOREAN FISHING ACTIVITY IN MAURITANIAN WATERS UNDER
PANAMANIAN OR SIMILARLY NONCONTROVERSIAL FLAG OF CON-
VENIENCE. EVENTUALLY SOUTH KOREANS MAY BE ABLE TO OPEN
ONE-MAN OFFICE IN NOUADHIBOU, MAURITANIA'S NORTHERN
PORT AND FISHING CENTER. EVEN SO, REPRESENTATIVE, IF SOUTH
KOREAN, WOULD BE WELL ADVISED TO CARRY PASSPORT OF COUNTRY WHICH HAS
RELATIONS WITH GIRM. THIS PRECAUTION WOULD PERMIT GIRM
TO TELL DPRK AMBASSADOR THAT THERE ARE NO ROK NATIONALS
RESIDENT IN MAURITANIA. FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF ROKG-
GIRM RELATIONSHIP WILL DEPEND ON VARIETY OF FACTORS,
NOT LEAST OF WHICH IS EVOLUTION OF DPRK-ROK RELATIONS.

5. WE NOTE THAT ROK OFFICIALS EXPRESSED CONCERN, AS
REPORTED SEOUL 810 AND CASABLANCA 202, OVER MAURITANIAN
ANNOUNCEMENT THAT WATERS EXTENDING 30 MILES OFF ITS
PORTION OF SAHARA HAVE BEEN CLOSED TO FISHING. ALTHOUGH
WE HAVE SEEN SIMILAR REPORT IN LOCAL PRESS, TO OUR KNOW-
LEDGE THERE HAS NOT YET BEEN ANY OFFICIAL PROMULGATION
OF THIS ORDER. MATTER IS FURTHER COMPLICATED IN THAT
THERE HAS BEEN NO PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT OF PARTITION LINE DIVIDING

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PAGE 01 NOUAKC 00396 02 OF 02 202333Z

15

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SP-02 INT-05 /090 W

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R 201427Z FEB 76
FM AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5162
INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
AMEMBASSY MADRID
AMEMBASSY RABAT
AMEMBASSY SEOUL
AMEMBASSY TOKYO
AMCONSUL CASABLANCA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 NOUAKCHOTT 0396

MOROCCAN PORTION OF SAHARA FROM MAURITANIAN (THIS)
ISSUE WILL BE CLARIFIED SOON AFTER FEBRUARY 28 WHEN SPANISH (#) THEIR PRESENCE
IN SAHARA AND TRIPARTITE ADMINISTRATION COMES TO END.

6. CONCERNING PROPOSAL TO FLY MOROCCAN FLAG ON SOUTH
KOREAN FISHING VESSELS PLYING MAURITANIAN WATERS, WE
FORESEE NO DIFFICULTY OVER SHORT TERM, BUT ARE SOMEWHAT
LESS SANGUINE ABOUT LONG-TERM PROSPECTS OF THIS ARRANGE-
MENT. MAURITANIAN-MOROCCAN RELATIONS ARE CURRENTLY
EXCELLENT. THEY HAVE NOT ALWAYS BEEN GOOD, HOWEVER,
AND THERE ARE NO ASSURANCES THEY WILL REMAIN CORDIAL.
ON OTHER HAND, IT IS ALMOST INCONVEIVABLE THAT PROBLEMS
WILL DEVELOP IN MAURITANIAN-PANAMIAN "RELATIONS".
NEVERTHELESS, IF ROK CAN QUICKLY WORK OUT ARRANGEMENT
WITH MOROCCO, THIS MIGHT BE BEST SOLUTION FOR TIME
BEING.

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PAGE 02 NOUAKC 00396 02 OF 02 202333Z

7. WE STRONGLY ADVISE AGAINST USING ALLEGED DPRK
SUPPORT OF POLISARIO IN EFFORT BY ROK TO DEVELOP
WEDGE BETWEEN DPRK AND MAURITANIA. FIRST, WE HAVE NOT
YET SEEN HARD EVIDENCE THAT DPRK IS IN FACT NG
POLISARIO. SECOND, WE DOUBT THAT SOUTH KOREANS ARE
SUFFICIENTLY STEEPED IN NUANCES OF SAHARA DISPUTE TO
USE THIS ARGUMENT EFFECTIVELY, EVEN IF IT IS TRUE.
THIRD, THERE IS GOOD CHANCE THAT GIRM WOULD TAKE
EXCEPTION TO THIS KIND OF "PRESSURE" TACTIC. WE
THINK ROK CAN MOST EFFECTIVELY APPROACH GIRM ON
BUSINESSLIKE BASIS, EMPHASIZING MONETARY ADVANTAGES
THAT WOULD ACCRUE TO MAURITANIA IF IT WERE TO PERMIT
INCREASE IN NUMBER OF SOUTH KOREAN VESSELS OPERATING
IN MAURITANIAN WATERS. HANDYSIDE

NOTE BY OC/T: NOUAKCHOTT 396(#)OMISSION. CORRECTION TO FOLLOW.

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